

## **Anaphylaxis**

### **A severe and potentially life-threatening reaction**

Anaphylaxis is the most severe kind of allergic reaction, usually involving several body systems. It can be life-threatening and may arise from allergy to foods as well as to insect stings, medication, latex and exercise.

It's also known as anaphylactic shock.

#### **Symptoms of anaphylaxis**

Any or all of the following symptoms may be present during an anaphylaxis reaction:

- Swelling of tongue and/or throat.
- Difficulty in swallowing or speaking.
- Vocal changes (hoarse voice).
- Wheeze or persistent cough or severe asthma.
- Difficult or noisy breathing.
- Stomach cramps or vomiting after an insect sting.
- Dizziness/collapse/loss of consciousness (due to a drop in blood pressure).

If they have been diagnosed with anaphylaxis make sure their school is aware of their allergy.

#### **Managing your allergy**

Being young and trying to manage your severe allergy can be hard work. Below are some tips to help them stay safe.

- Make sure those around them know they have an allergy.
- If they have been prescribed an auto-injector make sure they carry it at all times - there should be no exceptions; they may also be advised to get an emergency card or bracelet with full details of their allergy and doctor's contact details to alert others.
- Have a health care plan in school to ensure the school staff know how to manage emergency care.

#### **They can reduce the chances of being exposed to a food allergen by:**

- Checking food labels and ingredients.
- Letting staff at a restaurant know what they're allergic to so it's not included in their meal.
- Remembering some types of food may contain small traces of potential allergens - for example, some sauces contain wheat and peanuts.
- Be sure not to swap food with others.
- Avoid eating anything containing unknown ingredients.
- Make sure they remain vigilant on special occasions

including holidays or times of celebration, such as weddings, parties or religious festivals.

**Act immediately**

- They must let an adult know immediately if they eat something they think might contain food to which they are allergic.
- Let an adult know immediately if they believe they are having an allergic reaction, even if the cause is unknown.

**They can reduce their risk of being stung by an insect by taking basic precautions, such as:**

- Moving away from wasps, hornets or bees slowly without panicking - don't wave their arms around or swat at them.
- Using an insect repellent if they spend time outdoors, particularly in the summer.
- Being careful drinking out of cans when there are insects around - insects may fly or crawl inside the can and sting them in the mouth when they take a drink.
- Not walking around outside with bare feet.

**Contacts**

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/anaphylaxis](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/anaphylaxis)  
[www.anaphylaxis.org.uk](http://www.anaphylaxis.org.uk)  
[www.allergyuk.org](http://www.allergyuk.org)  
111.nhs.uk or call 111

**School Nurse 020 8770 5409**